

# Fourteen Interesting Ways\* to use Google Docs in the Classroom (\*and Tips)



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## #1 - Use Spreadsheets for a first collaboration session.

- For the first session with your class on sharing and collaborating use a spreadsheet.
- There is a limit of **50 synchronous collaborators** so there is plenty of room for a whole class.
- In this way you can include **everyone** and prove the concept of a shared workspace and live updating.

# 50



## #2 - Share pulse rate data

- Use a **single shared spreadsheet** for the whole class.
- Add the children's names in the first few columns.
- Add Pulse Rate 1, Pulse Rate 2 ... along the column headings.
- When exploring **resting pulse rate** or **pulse rate change** ask the whole class to add their data at the same time.
- Pooled data could then be analysed, averaged, charted and explored.
- The sharing of data from peers helps children to think about the **accuracy and reliability** of science data and to deal with a larger data set quickly.

Pulse 4	Pulse 5	Pulse 6	Pulse 7	Pulse 8
70	66	49		
80	97	96	81	60
89	85	89	89	90
102	62	90	72	102
42	102	104	90	30
68	72	76	80	82
78	52	72	60	90
66	60	66	32	46

## #3 - Know your limits

- There are limits on the number of synchronous collaborators for each Doc type.
- 10 people can edit a **Presentation** at the same time.
- 50 people can edit a **Spreadsheet** simultaneously.
- 10 people can edit a **Document** at the same time.
- There is a limit of 200 combined viewers/ collaborators for all of the different Doc types.



Image: '50'



## #4 - Use a Table in a Document to facilitate collaboration

- Unlike Spreadsheets with cells and Presentations with pages, Documents are an **open space**, and can sometimes exacerbate communication problems when collaborating.
- Consider using a **TABLE** when you are working in large numbers in a Document.
- **Add structure** to the page by adding a TABLE or if that does not suit the work, simple headings to signpost where people are working.
- This **structure helps** younger children to collaborate.



## #5 - I am Unique!

- This is a good activity to **model** the use of a shared space and live editing, as well as learning about a new class.
  - It can be done in any of the Doc types.
  - Ask your class to individually work on a single shared Document and finish the sentence: "**I am Unique because...**"
- They can add 3 different answers.
  - Not only will you learn about your children but as it is shared they will **learn about each other**.





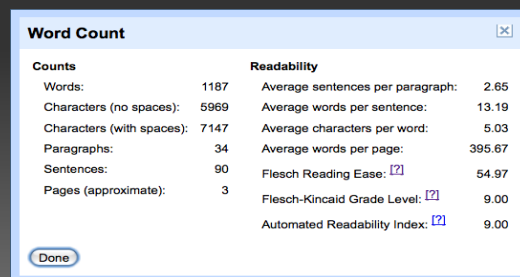
## #6 - Document Stats

- From the Tools menu, choose Word Count

Includes statistics about the document including the Automated Readability Index. It's a great motivator for students to have them write to their grade level. Gives students the ability to review the work and improve word choice, sentence structure and other key elements in their document.

More on readability:

<http://plainlanguage.com/newreadability.html>



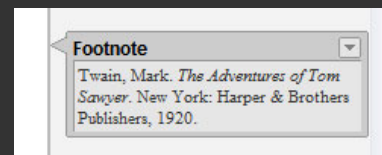
Word Count	
Counts	Readability
Words:	1187
Characters (no spaces):	5969
Characters (with spaces):	7147
Paragraphs:	34
Sentences:	90
Pages (approximate):	3
Average sentences per paragraph:	2.65
Average words per sentence:	13.19
Average characters per word:	5.03
Average words per page:	395.67
Flesch Reading Ease:	54.97
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level:	9.00
Automated Readability Index:	9.00



## #7 - Add a Footnote

- From the Insert menu, choose Footnotes

Great lead in to teach about copyright, plagiarism, and cyber-ethics in general. Document will include a # at the location of the inserted footnote with information in the sidebar. When printed, it is located at the end of the document for proper documentation.



More on Google Footnotes:

<http://is.gd/4V0u>

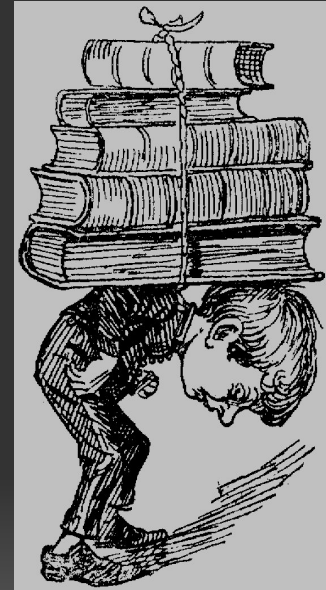


## #8 - Collaborative Homework

The collective working abilities of google docs are incredibly useful for collaborative homework.

For example several students can work on their presentation to be delivered during the hand-in lesson.

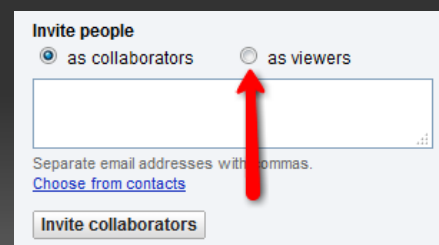
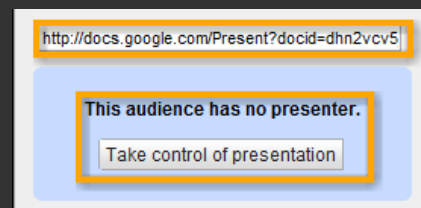
An alternative use is to collaborate on environmental / experimental data allowing access to group results and data.



## #9 - Publish a presentation for protected sharing.

- Instead of sharing a presentation in the normal way, allow students to view the **published version**.
- In this way it remains protected and edits are closed.
- Your students will get a better look at the presentation.
- You can **retain control** over what they see and when.
- Just email or share the **presentation URL** from the top right of the presentation screen.

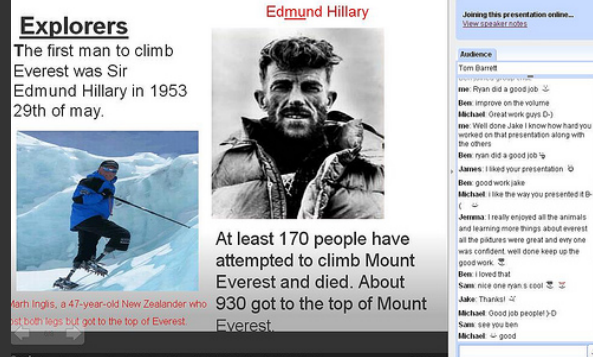
An alternative would be to invite "Viewers" instead of "Collaborators".



## #10 - Use the Backchannel!



- Whilst presenting, encourage the class to respond to verbal questions in the **chat window** of the presentation.
- Better still have questions prepared on the slides for them to respond to.
- I have found that Year 5 (9-10 years old) children are **engaged and motivated** by using this instant messaging in a structured form in lessons.
- We have also had success when students are reviewing other children's presentations and **adding feedback** in the chat window.



Google chat feature in GPres

## #11 - Inline Video and Images in Chat

- A little known feature of Google Presentations is the ability to **display and share videos and images** in the chat feature.
- Instead of just the link appearing the **video** or **image** itself is visible, the presentation audience can simply click play to watch it right there.

These url's are recognised:

- Videos from Google Video or YouTube
- Images, albums or slideshows from Picasa Web Albums and Flickr



Whilst you are working as a whole class ask them to contribute YouTube links on the presentation topic or Flickr/Picasa images to define words in literacy. They will appear there in the chat for the whole class to see.

Use the "Grab the Link" url for Flickr images in Presentation chat.

## #12 - Use Templates



Google has created templates for students and teachers.

- Teachers can direct students to use a certain template or they can browse the different categories.
- Teachers can also create their own templates and share them with their students.
- Make sure students save the template as a copy.

Screencast on using templates with students

Middle School Lab Report Template

## #13 - Collaborate prior to a field trip

The Big Zoo Trip - by Westpark and Stanley Elementary First Graders

Sara (Kansas City Zoo)

The gorilla is gray and black.  
Bob likes to eat vegetables.

He plays on rocks and gorilla toys.

He has lots of friends, but no baby.

Kaylee (Cleveland Zoo)

The gorilla is all black.

Mac likes to eat vegetables.  
He likes to play with the other gorillas.

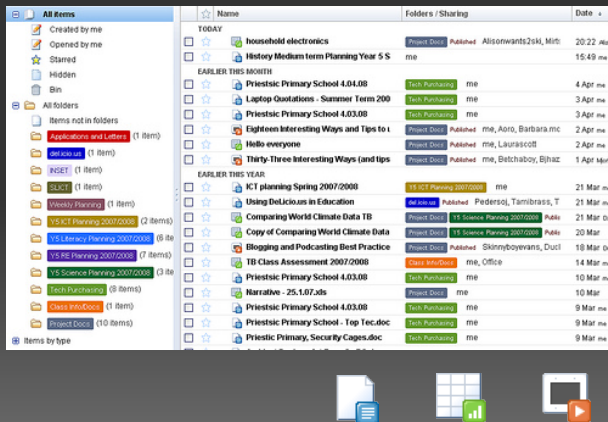
He also has a baby.



# #14 - Get Organised or just Search!

Encourage the children in your class to create subject folders from the NEW menu as they begin to create more documents.

These folders can be labelled with different colours to help show where documents belong.



Encourage them to also use SEARCH to quickly find what they are looking for. I find this one of the quickest ways to find content. Advanced searches are also an option.

If you would like to:

- Contribute your ideas and tips to the presentation.
- Let me know how you have used the resource.
- Get in touch.

You can email me.



Subscribe to the presentation RSS to get the latest tips.

Thanks for participating  
Tom Barrett

